

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 KATHMANDU 002443

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/INS AND DS/IP/NEA  
STATE ALSO PLEASE PASS USAID/DCHA/OFDA  
USAID FOR ANE/AA GORDON WEST AND JIM BEVER  
MANILA FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA  
LONDON FOR POL/REIDEL  
TREASURY FOR GENERAL COUNSEL/DAUFHAUSER AND DAS JZARATE  
TREASURY ALSO FOR OFAC/RNEWCOMB AND TASK FORCE ON TERRORIST  
FINANCING  
JUSTICE FOR OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL/DLAUFMAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM PTER CASC PGOV NP

SUBJECT: NEPAL: UPDATE ON MAOIST ACTIVITIES, DEC 14-DEC 20

#### SUMMARY

1. On December 18 the European Union issued a statement calling for the Government of Nepal (GON) and Maoist insurgents to move ahead toward negotiations. A December 19 report by Amnesty International found human rights abuses in Nepal at an unprecedented high. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's report to the UN Security Council, to be released in full on December 23, implicates the Maoists in their recruitment of children as combatants. A committee of NGO activists claimed progress in bringing the GON and Maoists to the negotiating table. However, schools remained closed for the second week of an indefinite Maoist educational strike. Maoist violence continued with the murder of two innocent civilians, the killings of eleven policemen, and the abduction of four children. Maoists also destroyed 13 District Forest Offices.

#### EU CALLS FOR CEASEFIRE

2. On December 18 the European Union (EU) issued a statement strongly condemning the ongoing insurgency and calling on the Maoists to stop its campaign of killings, destruction and harassment, citing concerns over violations of human rights and international law. The EU statement called for an immediate ceasefire and asked the government and the Maoists to enter into negotiations. The statement also expressed support for the work of The National Human Rights Commission, emphasizing the need to implement the recommendations in the commission's future report, and decried evidence of human rights violations committed by the security forces.

#### UNPRECEDENTED LEVEL OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE IN NEPAL

3. In a December 19 report entitled "Nepal-A Deepening Human Rights Crisis: Time For International Action," Amnesty International(AI) declared that human rights abuses have reached an unprecedented high. AI called on the international community to address the deepening human rights crisis in Nepal and provide assistance to the government, to include the establishment of an office of the High Commissioner For Human Rights (OICHR). The AI report cites evidence of abuses committed by both the Maoists and the security forces.

#### MAOIST USE OF CHILD SOLDIERS

4. A preview released on December 16 of a report submitted by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to the UN Security Council implicates the Maoists in the recruitment of children for use as combatants. Annan's report, which will be released in full on December 23, includes Nepal in a list of countries violating internationally accepted standards, which prohibit the recruitment of children under the age of fifteen.

#### SCHOOL STRIKE CONTINUES

5. The student wing of the underground Maoist party, All Nepal National Independent Students' Union (Revolutionary), ANNISU-R, has warned that it would resort to a nationwide shutdown of academic institutions if the government continued with its "irresponsible attitude." All the schools and colleges in the Kathmandu valley remain closed indefinitely following the strike, or "bandh," called by the pro-Maoist student body on December 9, 2002. Maoist threats to kidnap students from school, as well as physical attacks on teachers in some schools, are inhibiting attendance at schools in various parts of the country. Armed insurgents recently entered several schools in western Kailali district and assaulted teachers in their classrooms. ANNISU-R warned

that it would take "bolder steps and actions" if its demands, including that the government lift its terrorist designation of the group, were not met immediately. Home Minister Dharma Bahadur Thapa, however, has reaffirmed that the terrorist label will stay.

16. Padma Ratna Tuladhar, an NGO activist with links to the Maoists, claimed his recent discussions with the Maoist-affiliated student union included "positive steps towards a solution of the problem." Tuladhar is a member of a three-man committee that hopes to facilitate talks between the government and the pro-Maoist student union. Tuladhar predicted the committee "will come up with something concrete" after December 25.

#### UNICEF URGES END TO EDUCATION STALEMATE

-----

17. Suomi Sakai, UNICEF Representative to Nepal, on December 16, expressed concern over the education crisis in Nepal and called on all parties to stop using education for political reasons. Sakai said that the educational strike only disadvantages Nepali children, declaring, "School education is a basic right and must be declared a zone of peace."

18. A number of children's rights organizations have voiced their concern over the effects that the Maoist insurgency, particularly the closure of schools, has on children. The National Human Rights Commission called on the government to create an environment that safeguards the right to education and said the ANNFSU-R should act responsibly by not infringing on the right to education. The Commission said it is ready to play any necessary role to end the disruption of education in Nepal.

#### MAOISTS ATTACK POLICE AND CIVILIANS

-----

19. In separate incidents, Maoists shot and killed eleven policemen. On December 19 six policemen were killed and seven were injured in a Maoist attack on the Koilabas Border Police Post in southern Dang, near the border of Nepal and India. According to the local superintendent of police, over four hundred rebels attacked the post. The insurgents also made off with rifles and guns taken from the police post.

110. On December 16, Maoists shot and killed a policeman at Ramthan in Kapilvastu district. The rebels fled into a nearby jungle after the shooting and security forces launched a manhunt for the suspects. In another incident, a group of Maoist rebels hacked a policeman to death on December 18, in southwestern Banke District. Two other policemen were also killed on December 18 at Surkhet Airport in the mid-western part of the country and Taplejung in the east. Both were shot and killed by Maoists while on duty. The head constable of the Kailali district was shot and killed December 18th in his home by Maoist rebels.

111. According to security forces, Maoist terrorists abducted four children from the western district of Doti and killed two brothers from Siddhar VDC in western district of Arghakhanchi. Tarapati Pokhrel and his brother, Tej Prasad Pokhrel, had been held captive since their abduction November 16th. Maoists called the killings a "public action" and claimed the brothers supported the security forces.

#### MAOIST ACTIVITY FORCES EXODUS OF THOUSANDS

-----

112. According to local press reports "thousands" of people have fled their homes in fear of forced recruitment by the Maoists. The exodus occurred after rumors circulated that the rebels were about to attack one of the district headquarters in the western Karnali zone. Maoists have reportedly threatened to forcibly recruit the villagers or use them as human shields. Thousands of villagers from the mid-western town of Nepalgunj have also left, heading to India to escape the rebels, violence and unemployment. Officials at the border police post at Nepalgunj recorded more than 8,000 people passing through during the week of December 4-11, the highest weekly figure ever recorded. Over 60,000 Nepalis have left their districts in the mid and far western regions of Nepal, leaving some villages entirely deserted.

#### MAOISTS DESTROY 13 DISTRICT FOREST OFFICES

-----

113. Maoist rebels destroyed 13 district forest offices (DFO). According to Kamal Bhakta Shrestha, regional director of the Regional Forest Office (RFO), the DFOs in Illam, Okhaldhunga, Sankhuwasabha, Bhojpur, Solukhumbu, Khotang, Udayapur, Jhapa, Terhathum, Morang, Sunsari, Siraha

and Taplejung have all been destroyed by the Maoists. Three additional offices, in Mahle, Tellok and Sinam of Taplejung district have also fallen into the Maoist control. A total of 32 range posts in the eastern development region have been destroyed, causing 130,000 dollars in damages.

14. Maoists have also caused 40,000 dollars in damages at the Modikhhola Hydropower Centre in Parbat District. Maoists have targeted the center twice before, including setting off a bomb, which destroyed windows, computers and furniture.

#### COMMITMENTS, DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH WANING

15. Escalating violence and political instability in Nepal are affecting financial and economic commitments to help Nepal. Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Nepal has been declining in the past few months. While the US remains the largest bilateral donor, other donors have cited concern over the intensifying political turmoil and the weak implementation of development programs. According to the District Development Committee, Kanchanpur, out of 41 planned development projects, only 12 have been completed. The GON has blamed its inability to complete the projects within the specified time on Maoist activity at the proposed development sites.

16. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has also pointed out that the number of projects funded by their agency has been cut by 50 percent because of the uncertainty of the political situation and the escalation of the insurgency. Destruction of facilities and infrastructure have adversely affected the growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), particularly in the key areas of tourism and trade, which declined 0.6 percent in the fiscal year 2001-2002.

MALINOWSKI